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Lucia A Keegan 08/14/2006 05:17:00 PM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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ACTION: PAO
INFO: AMB ARS DCM POL

DISSEMINATION: PAOX

CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: PRS:

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0316

INFO RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

RUEATRS/DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY WASHDC

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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

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RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 6271

RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 7896

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 5536

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 005440

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PM; OSC ISA FOR ILN; NEA; WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC/WEUROPE; DOC FOR
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC KMDR FR

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Foiled London Attack

Israel-Lebanon Conflict - UN Negotiations

PARIS - Friday, August 11, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Foiled London Attack

Israel-Lebanon Conflict - UN Negotiations

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

The thwarted terrorist attack at London's Heathrow airport has replaced the Israeli-Lebanese conflict on today's front pages, although commentaries and headlines speak of "another war" and link the foiled attack to resentment brought on by the latest Middle East conflict. (See Part C)

For Le Figaro "The World Is on Alert" while the editorial is titled: "The Other War." Liberation headlines "War in the Skies." La Croix's headline "The Terrorist Awakening" is followed by the following subheading: "With the Middle East war as a backdrop, Al Qaeda is the

number one suspect." This opinion is shared by several Middle East experts.

President Bush's remark about "Islamic fascism" is prominently reported in Le Figaro. TF1 and FR2 television quote President Bush; TF1 in particular showed surprise at the President's tone which the journalist found "firm and almost martial." Le Parisien, which calls the attack "'A Direct Threat to the United States', " summarizes the White House's reaction to the foiled attack and quotes President Bush's response: "We are at war with Islamic fascists who are ready to use all means to destroy us and do us harm."

An expert on Islamic fundamentalism, Dominique Thomas in his interview in Le Figaro says "the Lebanese war has been the detonator, even if it is not the only cause behind the planned attacks." Olivier Roy, director of research at the CNRS, says in Le Parisien: "yesterday's events carry al Qaeda's signature without a doubt. The question is: what is its degree of implication..." Al Qaeda plotting does not play a role in the Israeli-Lebanese conflict, Roy says, though "al Qaeda tries to capitalize on all conflicts" to recruit "fascinated youths." In Liberation another expert, Paul Wilkinson, comments on the new terrorist methods: "it is clear the terrorists are looking for alternative explosives which are less easily detected than conventional military explosives." Wilkinson believes that "terrorist cells are still very much operational on the European continent."

On the Lebanese-Israeli front, Liberation announces that the UN is close to reaching an agreement, with France proposing a "gradual pullout" (See Part C) while a number of reports indicate that Israel is holding off on its "major offensive." Liberation and FR2 television announce that Israel has not yet launched its great offensive into Lebanon "to let diplomacy do its job." In Le Figaro a former high official of the UNIFIL, Timor Goksel says: "Hezbollah is just waiting for Israel to push further into Lebanon. If Tsahal goes to the banks of the Litani river, it will be mired in Hezbollah's trap." La Croix carries remarks by French General Loup Francart about Hezbollah's challenges for the Israeli army: the difficulty lies in the asymmetry of the fighting. Despite the slow progress, Francart says "the Israeli army is no less accustomed to fighting guerillas."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Foiled London Attack

"The Other War"

Yves Threard in right-of-center Le Figaro (08/11): "While all eyes are on the Middle East, there is another unfinished war going on... which demonstrates that Muslim fundamentalism is this century's principal enemy... This is a crusade which recruits its fighters from the poor suburbs of Cairo, but also from those of our western capitals and from Afghanistan's tribal areas... While many will see the latest Middle East war and the on going war in Iraq as a detonator... this attack and anti-West hatred have deep roots going way back in time... The arrest of Bin Laden, a U.S. pullout from Iraq or pacification of the Middle East will not stop this Jihad... We must persevere in a merciless war against those who serve this reactionary war."

"Venom"

Gerard Dupuy in left-of-center Liberation (08/11): "The net this time caught the terrorists, but one day it will allow the sharks to pass through it... The idea that we've lived so long with this threat over our heads is so disagreeable that we willingly forget that nearly every year since 2001, a large attack becomes a testament to the very real danger. We have to learn to live with it as some people learn to live with a seismic threat under their feet. And do everything to warn about coming attacks, endure an XXL version of "Vigipirate" (the French terrorist warning alert system) that's already brewing, and refuse to fall into the hysteria of the war on terrorists which is their most insidious venom. Radical Islam has several irons in the fire or rather several fires in their Hell. The Shiite version inspires Hezbollah martyrs in Lebanon. The Sunni version has ramifications for terrorists affiliated with Al-Qaeda. These Islamists are rivals as much as they are twins... An aggressive policy as per Bush's complicates the problem but does not create it... An honorable settlement of the issues of the Middle

East is infinitely desirable but does not resolve all the tensions that give rise to this terrorism - the more reason to learn to live with it."

"Contagion"

Dominique Quinio in Catholic La Croix (08/11): "The international community must get involved in resolving the Lebanese war and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in its own best interest... Until now the international community has been remiss, but the foiled suicide attacks should be incentive enough to get it back to work... It is imperative not to give fundamentalists more fodder for their cause... like America's failed policy in Iraq."

Middle East - Israel-Lebanon Conflict - UN Negotiations

The UN Close to an Agreement"

Laurent Mauriac in left-of-center Liberation (08/11): "Washington made a gesture towards France's proposal for 'a gradual pullout' from Lebanon. This is an important enough step for FM Douste-Blazy to say that he expected a resolution 'at any moment.' While Kofi Annan is pressing for a resolution before the end of the week, it is Washington and Paris's desire not to break up over an issue they have been handling hand in hand which has allowed the move forward... A French diplomat acknowledges that 'the Americans, no more than us, want a break in the negotiations...'"

"Israeli Calculations"

Left-of-center Le Monde in its editorial (08/11): "As always the military and diplomatic calendars go hand in hand... There is no chance of Israel losing mastery of the situation, in which it has expertly mixed military and diplomatic components. While the battle rages on in Southern Lebanon, at the UN the talks are stalled... and France is now asking Washington to take into account Lebanon's demands. The crucial question is 'the nature' of the military presence in South Lebanon after Tsahal pulls out: an international force say the U.S. and Israel, the Lebanese army says the Lebanese government, its Arab allies, and Hezbollah. France is in the middle, trying to reconcile these two points of view. While the Lebanese offer and Hezbollah's acceptance represent a turning point, Washington is rejecting the offer... For Israel and the U.S., time means an opportunity to achieve more military successes over Hezbollah. But time is working against Lebanon and its casualties."

STAPLETON